

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08221 291452Z

46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-06 IO-10 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01

OPR-02 SY-05 SAM-01 AID-05 SCCT-01 INRE-00 USSS-00

OMB-01 SCA-01 PER-01 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 SR-02 ORM-01 SCS-03 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 /119 W

----- 118052

O R 291112Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5018

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 08221 291452Z

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8221

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: WORST NIGHT YET; NO END IN SIGHT ON POLITICAL FRONT

REF: BEIRUT 8213

1. BEIRUT PASSED JUNE 28/29 WHAT LEBANESE ARMY SOURCE DESCRIBED AS WORST NIGHT YET. CLASHES CONTINUED IN AIN RUMANNEH/SHIA AND DOWNTOWN AREAS AND TOOK FIRMER GRIP, FOR FIRST TIME IN CURRENT ROUND, ON OTHER DISTRICTS WHICH HAD HERETOFORE EXPERIENCED ONLY BARRICADES AND SPORADIC NIGHT-TIME BOMBING. FROM APPROXIMATELY 2200 HOURS LOCAL AND THROUGHOUT HOURS OF DARKNESS, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE WAS CLEARLY AUDIBLE FROM RAS BEIRUT, PUNCTUATED FREQUENTLY BY HEAVY EXPLOSIONS WHICH WERE MELANGE OF MORTARS, ROCKETS, AND DYNAMITE. FIRING ENCROACHED AT ONE TIME UPON PERIMETER OF LUXURY HOTEL DISTRICT IN VICINITY OF HOLIDAY INN.

2. AS OF 0900 HOURS LOCAL, JUNE 29, LIAISON CENTER IS REPORTING THAT ALL ROADS LEADING INTO BEIRUT AND MANY WITHIN THE CITY ARE NOT RPT NOT SAFE TO TRAVEL. ALL RPT ALL RESIDENTS ARE BEING WARNED BY CENTER TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES. THIS IS FIRST TIME SINCE TROUBLES BEGAN LAST MARCH THAT GOL HAS ISSUED PUBLIC WARNING THIS STRINGENT AND CATEGORIC. FALL-OUT FROM CRISIS HAS NOT ONLY BLANKETED MOST OF BEIRUT BUT HAS EXPANDED SIGNIFICANTLY IN LAST 24 HOURS TO AFFECT OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY. SIDON, TYRE, AND NABATIYEH IN THE SOUTH ARE RELIABLY REPORTED TO BE COMPLETELY SHUT DOWN, WITH MAJOR IMPETUS COMING FROM ADHERENTS OF QUOTE PROGRESSIVE UNQUOTE GROUPS WHO HAVE MADE ARMED APPEARANCE IN STREETS. TRIPOLI, WHICH HAD BEEN SITE OF SEVERAL BOMBINGS DIRECTED AGAINST BANKDS DURING LAST TWO NIGHTS, IS ALSO SAID TO BE TENSE. IN BAALBEK, SHIITE SUPPORTERS OF IMAM MUSA SADR HAVE OCCUPIED GOL BUILDINGS AND THERE ARE ROADBLOCKS IN BEKA VALLEY IN VICINITY OF BAALBEK. OTHER SUPPORTERS OF IMAM MUSA, FULLY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 08221 291452Z

ARMED, HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO BEIRUT AND ARE ALLEGEDLY ENCAMPED IN SOME STRENGTH OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE WHERE HE CONTINUES HIS HUNGER STRIKE.

3. QUOTE PROGRESSIVE UNQUOTE PARTIES HAVE, AS PRESS HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, CALLED FOR GENERAL STRIKE MONDAY, JUNE 30. IT IS PROBABLE THAT THIS CALL WILL BE HEEDDED IN BEIRUT AND THROUGHOUT MOST OF LEBANON AND WE DOUBT THOSE WHO MIGHT

BE INCLINED TO RESIST STRIKE WILL DO SO OUT OF FEAR OF RETALIATION BY LEFTIST QUOTE ENFORCERS UNQUOTE. IN VIEW OF SITUATION, WE DOUBTFUL THAT SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF FSLs WILL BE ABLE TO REACH EMBASSY FOR WORK TOMORROW.

4. JUNE 28 MEETING OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS APPARENTLY FAILED TO REACH CONCLUSIVE POSITION AND PARTICIPANTS ARE EXPECTED TO RECONVENE TUESDAY, JULY 1, FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS WITH PREMIER-DESIGNATE KARAME. KARAME, AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WAS EXPECTED TO TRAVEL TODAY (JUNE 29) TO TRIPOLI. NOTHING FURTHER HAS BEEN HEARD RE THIS TRIP, WHICH MANY HAD REGARDED AS POTENTIAL WATERSHED IN HIS ATTEMPT TO FORM NEW CABINET. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE HAS CANCELLED THE TRIP IN FACE OF DETERIORATING CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

5. AS CHAOS AND CONFUSION PERSISTS, IT BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN HARD INFORMATION OR EVEN INTELLIGENT SPECULATION ON COURSE OF EITHER POLITICAL OR SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS. AS POLITICAL LEADERS APPEAR TO LOSE CONTROL OF EVENTS. USUALLY WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS SHOW LESS CONFIDENCE IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF FACTS OR UNDERSTANDING OF DRIFT. PALESTINIAN OFFICES IN TARIQ JDIIDE REGION IN SABRA/ARAB UNIVERSITY ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE APPARENTLY OBJECT OF DYNAMITE ATTACK DURING NIGHT JUNE 28/29. NEITHER GOL AUTHORITIES, WHO ADMIT BOMBINGS DURING DARK WERE SO NUMEROUS THAT THEY HAD TO GIVE UP COUNTING, NOR CONTACTS WITH GOOD PALESTINIAN SOURCES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY TARGET, MUCH LESS VICTIMS OR PERPETRATORS. CONSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE HEARD THAT PREMISES BELONG EITHER TO PLO OR PFLP (A BIG DIFFERENCE) BUT THERE IS CONSENSUS THAT FROM FIVE TO SEVEN PROBABLE PALESTINIANS WERE KILLED IN BLAST. WE HAVE NO RPT NO EVIDENCE THAT MAIN-LINE FATAH OR SA'IQA ELEMENTS ARE FIGHTING AS UNITS, BUT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 08221 291452Z

WIDENING CONFLICT, PARTICULARLY IF IT TOUCHES SERIOUSLY ON REFUGEE CAMPS WILL MAKE THEIR CONTINUED ABSTENTION PROBLEMATIC.

6. SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, ALL AMCITS REMAIN SAFE. WE CONTINUE ADVISE THAT THEY REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES. AIRPORT OPERATING NORMALLY BUT, IN VIEW GENERAL SITUATION, SECURITY OF ROAD TO AIRPORT SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM HOUR TO HOUR.
GODLEY

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